

I thank the Chair, and I thank my colleagues for their support on this important legislation.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senate for approving S. 1693, the "Vision 2020 National Parks Restoration Act." This is the culmination of over two years of work and reflects a lifetime of concern I have had about protecting our nation's parks. America's park system needs attention and it needs our help soon. I believe this bill will provide it.

When we began this effort more than a year ago I came to the floor and challenged Senators to imagine for a moment an America without national parks. How would we feel without Yosemite, Independence Hall, or Grand Canyon protected for public enjoyment? How much of our national identity reflected in these icons—the Statue of Liberty, Yellowstone, or the National Capital Mall—would be lost? How much would be missing without the rugged, adventurous American spirit embodied in Glacier Park or Denali? That was the challenge. The U.S. Senate has risen to answer that challenge by passing this bill today.

I'm profoundly proud of what we have accomplished. This effort has been on behalf of the millions of park visitor that flock to the wide open spaces or the rich historic sites. It's for taxpayers who expect the very best return for their money. And it's for the future generations of people, for whom we've worked hard, to preserve the very best of our public land heritage.

I want to express my deep appreciation to the chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, Chairman MURKOWSKI, as well as Senator BUMPERS and Senator BENNETT, who have labored long in this area of parks support, and I thank them for all of their hard work in this legislation. The compromise we developed in order to pass this measure is in the finest tradition of the Senate. The negotiations were tough, and nobody got everything they wanted in the bill. However, we have put together a good piece of legislation that will make a positive and proactive change to help our national parks.

I also want to recognize the hard work of the staff, particularly Dan Naatz of my staff, and Jim O'Toole of the committee staff.

Over the last two years, we have spoken to dozens of groups interested in preserving our parks. We have traveled across the country and listened to the concerns of folks ranging from the motion picture industry to natural resource experts. We have heard the suggestions as well as the criticisms of our colleagues and worked to evaluate areas where we could make positive improvements for our parks. Throughout all of these meetings and hearings, one message came through loud and clear—the value of national parks is one of the cultural constants for Americans.

The Vision 2020 bill provides a systematic approach to addressing the

needs of the National Park Service. The restoration bill takes a broad approach, with eight titles covering the compromise bill.

Mr. President, the Senate can be proud of passing this landmark piece of legislation. As Americans, one of the finest legacies that we can leave our children and grandchildren is the National Park System that is healthy, vibrant and alive. We have an obligation to strengthen our outstanding system of parks, the system that over 100 other nations have modeled after ours.

Finally, I want to recognize the important contribution of the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, in developing this compromise bill. As folks know, the Secretary and I don't agree on all issues. However, to his credit, the Secretary recognized the important work we are doing and dedicated time and manpower of his agency to help. I thank the Secretary for his help.

Today is a good day for our parks. It's a good day for the U.S. Senate. Our commitment is to leave our children and grandchildren these wild and historic places healthy and whole. Today we are one big step forward toward achieving that worthwhile aspiration. I once again want to thank the Senate for passing S. 1693 and urge the House of Representatives to take up this bill as soon as possible.

#### SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE UNITED STATES AND KOREA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 245, and further, that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 245) expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States and the Republic of Korea should continue to advance already close bilateral security, economic and political ties for the mutual benefit of both countries.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and a statement of explanation appear at this point in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 245) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, is as follows:

#### S. RES. 245

Whereas, the United States maintains a close, critical and robust bilateral partner-

ship with the Republic of Korea, and has a profound interest in furthering that relationship;

Whereas, the U.S. security relationship with the ROK, based on the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty, bilateral consultations and combined is one of our most important, and it is in both countries' interest, as well as in the interest of the countries of the Asia Pacific region for that relationship to be maintained;

Whereas, the ROK is the United States' seventh largest trading partner, fifth largest export market and fourth largest market for U.S. agricultural products;

Whereas, the recent presidential election of Kim Dae Jung, formerly one of his country's most prominent dissidents, further demonstrates the strength and vibrancy of democracy in the ROK;

Whereas, the ROK has already made significant strides in reforming, restructuring and opening its economy in response to the Asian financial crisis;

Whereas, President Kim has committed his administration to making an array of further structural reforms that over the medium- to long-term, will produce a more open, competitive and dynamic Korea, benefiting the Korean people, U.S.-ROK relations and the global economy;

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that:

(1) The United States and the Republic of Korea should continue to advance already close bilateral security, economic and political ties for the mutual benefit of both countries, and for the maintenance of peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region; and

(2) Commends President Kim Dae Jung and the Republic of Korea for the measures already implemented and those measures it has committed to implement to resolve the country's economic and financial problems.

#### REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 105-50 AND TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 105-51

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaties transmitted to the Senate on June 11, 1998, by the President of the United States:

1. Extradition treaty with Austria (Treaty Document No. 105-50).

2. Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Treaty Document No. 105-51).

I further ask that the treaties be considered as having been read the first time; that they be referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed; and that the President's messages be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The messages of the President are as follows:

#### *To the Senate of the United States:*

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of